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ABSTRACT

This report explores two bilingual educational approaches currently in use in Mexico and the United States. The study pursues a limited comparison between two modalities of bilingual instruction, as observed and reported in the consulted literature. The U.S. model featured is known as the two-way bilingual model, an additive approach to instruction. The Mexican Spanish/Tarahumara/Tepehuano bilingual educational model is discussed within the scope of this project. Both countries face the challenge in their educational systems of providing bilingual content area instruction to monolingual populations. Contains 38 references. (EH)

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CORIMA:

A BILINGUAL EXPERIMENT IN THE TARAHUMARA REGION IN THE STATE OF CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

How does it measure against transitional bilingual programs in the United States?

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Mario A. Núñez
United States Department of Education
Fulbright-Hays Program-Mexico
US-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange
Summer-1994

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CORIMA:

Thank you in Tarahumara.
It also means:
I will give you back (reciprocity of favors)

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Rationale

Both the United States' and Mexico's educational systems face the challenge of providing bilingual content area instruction to monolingual populations within their countries. Although each of these special populations have different historical, economical and language needs, some general principles can be ascertained and inferred that could mutually benefit all parties concerned. Even though each country has focused their administrative efforts differently, both could learn from their experiences and from analyzing each other's programs' strengths and weaknesses. This report will explore some of the similarities and differences of two bilingual educational approaches currently in use in Mexico and the United States. It is hoped that the information and conclusions presented will benefit second language and content area education in both the United States and Mexico.

Introduction

The need to instruct children who do not speak the language of the dominant culture that they happen to inhabit, regardless of the cultural phenomena that has brought them there, seems to be universal. Zondag (1989) discusses the educational dilemmas faced by Dutch schools when instructing immigrant children from Friesland; parents' attitudes towards dual language education, content area instruction in Dutch-dominant environments and resulting friction between Friesian-speaking educators and an indolent Dutch government. However, other researchers are more positive and hopeful when describing a success story. Altena (1982) presents a research study conducted in an experimental bilingual school where children spoke a first language (Turkish) 75% of the time and 25% of the time a second language (Dutch) the first year; these first/second language relationships changed during following years, with a successful increment of the second language in all its dimensions.

Lessow-Hurley (1991) also presents at length what has come to be known as *The Canadian Example*. Since 1965, the anglophone community of the province of Quebec helped establish the Saint Lambert Experiment, a French immersion language program. Children who have participated have developed a high level of proficiency in French and were successful in learning content area subjects taught in the second language; but, most importantly, they also developed positive attitudes about the French-Canadian culture and, in

general, towards all French speakers.

The United States faces similar disjunctives with the ever-increasing multicultural migrant influx that forces the need upon local, state, and federal educational authorities to find viable alternatives to educate children who are not English-dominant. Unfortunately, present and past government initiatives that helped the establishment and maintenance of bilingual education programs and policies such as the Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Bilingual Education Act (Title II of Public Law 98-511) of 1964 and the Lau vs. Nichols (414 U.S. 563) of 1974 have not favored the interests of those populations that the programs claimed to serve. In fact, these initiatives have fostered the creation of monolingual isolated environments, composed of those who the system has failed to "incorporate" into the English-dominant culture. In addition, it has fostered the alienation of and the "otherness" perception of second language monolinguals by English-dominant monolinguals, who see immigrants as "aliens" and stranged from mainstream America.

Language parochialism in the United States has led to extreme situations that showcase the inability to receive and process information by individuals that are a product of the American educational system. This has caused some historical jokes; historically, the United States government policies had suppressed the use of Native American languages in any official setting. But during World War II, they were forced to enlist the help of Native

Navajo speakers coding messages for the United States Army, since the Japanese code breakers, who were English proficient, could not decipher them (Lessow-Hurley, 10). As for a more current example, only one in five of the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) agents assigned to Mexico City speak Spanish (Harper's Index, 1990).

There have been some efforts implemented by local, state, and federal educational authorities to ameliorate English-dominant language elitism. Educational programs that conduct content area and language instruction in both first and second languages (i.e. English/Spanish, English/Haitian Creole, English/Mandarin Chinese, etc.) (Massachusetts State Department of Education, 1990; U.S. Department of Education, 1987, 1990) have been initiated in various states and locals. However, there has been a disturbing new trend to limit and restrict the educational opportunities of ethnic and language minorities, starting in 1982 with Plyler vs. Doe (457 U.S. 202), which, fortunately, determined that under United States Supreme Court's Rule Interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, public schools cannot deny access to public education based on a student's immigration status. This may yet be tested in Court with the recent passing of the Proposition 187 in the State of California.

There are some countries that have considerably less resources and means to implement them than the United States; nonetheless, have proven that these are not crucial to the design and the implementation of a successful educational initiative. Indeed,

they are not hindered by language parochialism or legal restrictionism typical of the American bilingual education struggle and philosophical debate among educational authorities.

In the Tarahumara region, in the State of Chihuahua, located at the northernmost border of Mexico and the United States, an exemplary program has been designed and implemented. This area is inhabited by the Tarahumara, Tepehuano, Pima, and Guarohiro Native Mexicans, with a combined population of over 70,000 individuals. Their educational programs are under the Chihuahua State government supervision, and coordinated by an organism called "Coordinación Estatal de la Tarahumara" and its office "Oficina de Estudios Especiales y Educación". This office has spearheaded a partial immersion bilingual educational program in both Tarahumara/Tepehuano Native Mexican languages and Spanish, the dominant language of the region inhabitants. According to the available data, the initiative has proven to be very successful in instructing both first and second language learners in the languages themselves and in various elementary content area subjects. The report even suggests that the use of this particular mode of instruction has *improved* learning among both first and second language populations.

Mexico and the United States, throughout their strained joint histories, have shared borders, political upheavals, wars, and equal as well as diverse interests in a multitude of fields. In this day and age, they remain uneasy neighbors; negative preconceptions about each other, racial and economic tensions, and

differences in cultural perceptions have acted as obstacles against understanding. It appears to be that both cultures would benefit from friendship, cooperation, and mutual comprehension.

The United States and Mexico must learn about each other in order to create meaningful connections that will carry their upcoming generations to a more unified future. The genesis of cooperation and understanding is education. Therefore, by learning about each other's strengths and weaknesses, each country will become more than the sum of its parts.

Both countries face the challenge of educating a sizeable monolingual population in both content area subjects (i.e. mathematics, science, social studies, etc.) and a second language which is the dominant language of the country (i.e. in the United States, bilingual education for monolingual Hispanic immigrants; in Mexico, bilingual education for monolingual Native Mexican populations). Each country has approached the needs of these groups in different ways.

In the United States, the preferred instructional approach has been a substractive, transitional model, whereas in Mexico, a multitude of modalities that could be described as eclectic emerged. Many educational efforts on both sides of the border have been unsuccessful. Nonetheless, a recent Mexican bilingual additive maintenance model seems to have encountered a certain measure of success.

This study will pursue a limited comparison between two modalities of bilingual instruction in effect in both the United

States and Mexico, as observed and reported in the consulted literature. The United States model to be highlighted will be what is known as the two-way bilingual model, an additive approach to instruction. The Mexican Spanish/Tarahumara/Tepehuano bilingual educational model will be discussed within the scope of this project.

This study of the American two-way bilingual program model and the Spanish/Tarahumara/Tepehuano bilingual educational format was suggested by professor Manuel Suárez González, director of "Oficina de Estudios Especiales y Educación" of the "Coordinación Estatal de la Tarahumara", State of Chihuahua, and professors Eusebio Nodasco and Aureliano, at the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar Conference that took place at the Hotel San Francisco in Chihuahua, Chihuahua (Mexico) on June 28, 1994.

Bilingual Education Efforts in the United States

The United States Government recognizes that education is the basis of the future society and thus, its Constitution provides for all to be given an equal-opportunity education. In order to satisfy its own provisions, the Government created in 1964 the Bilingual Education Act (Tittle II of Public Law 98-511), which appropriates funds for instructional purposes for limited English proficient students (LEP).

LEP students are those who do not have the communicative competency to succeed in an English-only classroom. Recent estimates state that there are probably 3.5 to 5.3 million LEP students in the United States in Kindergarten through sixth grade.

In 1968, in order to serve an ever growing population of immigrants, including the Cuban influx to Miami, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Tittle VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which provided discretionary funds for model programs that utilize second language instruction to assist students in their academic achievement while they attain communicative competence in the English language. There are several types of program models that were endorsed by the Agency:

1. **Transitional Programs** serve LEP students; its language acquisition objective is for the student to master English communicative competency and literacy.

2. **Maintenance Programs'** objectives are to help LEP students attain mastery of not only the English Language but also of those subject areas typical of an elementary curriculum (mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, etc.) through a bilingual and biliterate program.

3. **Enrichment Programs** provide instruction in two languages for English-only students, also through a bilingual and biliterate program.

4. **Two-Way/Developmental Programs** can be defined as a hybrid between a maintenance and an enrichment program. They typically serve a student body of both LEP and English speaking students. The objective is to make all students proficient in both languages.

5. **Immersion Programs'** goals are to create true bilingual and biliterate citizens by delivering the instruction in a setting in which a bilingual teacher uses the second language as the sole means of instruction. Provisions are made for the students to receive language arts education in their first language.

As early as 1963, Coral Way Elementary, in Dade County, Florida, was first started as a Two-way bilingual program since Dade County Public Schools (DCPS) adopted bilingual instruction as a solution to the educational needs of the children of Cuban refugees. It became so popular that it was enthusiastically extended to other schools with Spanish speaking minorities in Dade County. Presently, DCPS' Two-Way bilingual programs serves its diverse multicultural population of over 50,000 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students.

When the students' progress in these settings was evaluated, it was found that participation in the two-way bilingual programs results in a performance equal to or better than those students who are only exposed to the regular bilingual curriculum. This model has the added advantage that while Spanish speaking LEP students are learning English, English speaking pupils are learning a second language.

Bilingual programs have become successful in a variety of

settings throughout the United States and Canada. By 1977, there were 518 bilingual education projects funded under Tittle VII, representing 67 different languages and dialects. (Grittner 1980)

A debate exists over which is the preferred mode of delivery to satisfy the needs of this ever-growing multicultural bilingual population. This current debate can be exemplified by the two extreme poles of instruction modalities; bilingual instructional programs can be classified as either substractive or additive approaches. Lessow-Hurley (1991) clarifies the issue defining **substractive** vs. **additive** bilingualism:

> . . . a substractive bilingual is a person who has replaced a first language with a new one; the first language is underdeveloped, or lost. Students become substractive bilinguals when schools do not support primary-language development. . . Compared with additive bilinguals, substractive bilinguals are at an academic disadvantage.
> An additive bilingual is a person who has learned a second language in addition to his native language. Monolingual English-speaking students become additive bilinguals when they acquire a second language. LEP students can become additive bilinguals in programs that maintain their first language and add English as a second language. Additive bilinguals seem to have an academic advantage over substractive bilinguals and monolinguals (22).

The 1990 Department of Education's Tittle VII funding structure provided $80.0 millions to transitional bilingual educational programs, a substractive approach, and only $3.0 millions to developmental bilingual education programs, an additive approach.

This practice is questionable, since the goal of the traditional transitional programs is to make students monolingual and monoliterate in a second language, in this case, English. The

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outcome of transitional programs appears to be substractive, since students are replacing their first language with the English language.

The participation of LEP students in maintenance, enrichment, two-way or immersion programs should be encouraged and fostered over transitional approaches. It fosters not only the acquisition and maintenance of a second language (whether it be English or Spanish), but also the maintenance and enrichment of their first language through content area and language arts instruction in their native language (English for English-dominant students, Spanish for Spanish-dominant students, etc.).

Of the additive approaches, the two-way bilingual model serves not only the needs of the LEP students, but also those of monolingual and monocultural students that need to learn the functional skills necessary to survive in a multilingual and multicultural future. It also promotes intercultural understanding by integrating the classroom and educating the community through parental involvement. A two-way bilingual setting can serve as a source of esteem building for minority LEP and English dominant students who belong to an alternative ethnic group (such as African Americans), who may sometimes perceive their cultures devalued and rejected by the dominant culture.

Christian (1992) advises to begin language instruction at an early age within "high expectation" programs (programs that demand high levels of second language proficiency and literacy from the students). A good design for such a program must take into

consideration what fundamental guidelines or basic expectations should be implemented for its success. Lindholm (1990) outlines the following fundamental criteria and implementation rules for a successful bilingual program in two languages:

1. Programs should provide a minimum of four to six years of bilingual instruction to participating students;
2. The focus of instruction should be the same core academic curriculum that the students in other programs experience;
3. Optimal language input (input that is comprehensible, interesting and of sufficient quantity) as well as opportunities for output should be provided to students, including quality language arts instruction in both languages;
4. The target (non-English) language should be used for instruction a minimum of 50% of the time (to a maximum of 90% in the early grades) and English should be used at least 10% of the time;
5. The program should provide an additive bilingual environment were all students have the opportunity to learn a second language while continuing to develop their native language proficiency;
6. Classrooms should include a balance of students from the target language and English backgrounds who participate in instructional activities together;
7. Positive interactions among students should be facilitated by the use of strategies such as cooperative learning; and
8. Characteristics of effective schools should be incorporated into programs, such as qualified personnel and home-school collaboration. (pp. 96-101)

In conclusion, it appears to be that those programs that utilize a primary language instructional approach foster academic success among monolingual LEP learners. Arguments in favor vary, but most agree that students who understand content area information in their primary language later on transfer this information into a second language communication framework. Also, students that are able to understand how their own native language

works are able to transfer their understanding, to their study of a second language (Lessow-Hurley, 1991). It also seems apparent that monolingual student populations benefit most from instruction conducted within an additive, maintenance-oriented program, whose goal is to produce at the end of the educational articulation an individual that is bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural.

Native Mexican Bilingual Education in Mexico

As early as 1910, the Mexican educational authorities tried to address the educational needs of the Native Mexican communities. Under the Interim President of the newly created Republic, Francisco León de la Barra, a decree was signed authorizing the establishment of a "rudimentary" instruction designed to educate

> ". . . principally those individuals of indigenous races, . . .(how) to speak, read, and write in Castellan, and to carry out the most fundamental and usual arithmetic operations" (Aguirre-Beltran, 1954) (*author's translation*)

These schools' goals were the absorption of the Native Mexicans into the mainstream culture (a substractive approach, very much similar to the modern American bilingual transitional programs). This approach also assumed that these populations were intellectually inferior to the individuals within the dominant, mainstream, Spanish speaking culture and, as such, had to be instructed with a watered-down, elemental curriculum that included only the most basic arithmetic as the sole content area taught. The indigenous populations resisted this methodology, and was discarded after many years of unrewarding application.

Later on, in 1939, the Tarascan Project, a teaching and methodology institute created by the Mexican Philological Assembly, was initiated in Paracho, a Purépecha Native Mexican town in the state of Michoacán. Twenty young teachers were trained with the Townsend Reading Method, translations and dictionaries in Purépecha and lots of propaganda. The project aimed at integrating instruction with materials and topics that the Purépecha considered

useful, such as hygiene and disease prophylaxis, agricultural extension activities, irrigation techniques, etc. The project was extremely successful in documenting the Tarascan oral literature, and in teaching the Natives how to read and write in Spanish. The project was cancelled in 1944 at the end of the Cárdenas regime, since it fell into political disfavor. (Aguirre-Beltran, 1954)

On November 10, 1948, and following the Second Interamerican Indigenist Congress in Cuzco, Perú in 1947, the Mexican president Miguel Alemán approved the law that created the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (National Indigenist Institute). This Institute fulfilled a double need of the Mexican government. The first, to showcase that Mexico was committed to the education and policy making of the Native Mexican populations. Secondly, to execute the policies that the Mexican Department of Education saw fit to impose upon those populations. The existence of the Institute admitted to the need of an integrated governmental policy that was capable of handling indigenous affairs. The Institute tried to coordinate action and education; to change the lives of the indigenous communities and while changing them, educating, also.

These issues proved to be so complicated that one unified, centralized agency could not manage them efficiently. The Institute became a monolithic bureaucratic establishment, fraught with strife, politics, favoritism, and fund misappropriation. Meanwhile, amid the politics, the needs of the Native Mexicans were not been met.

Today, the majority of the Native Mexican groups (except some

isolated cases, such as the Huicholes and the Tarahumaras) cannot be distinguished, at least on their superficial cultural external aspects from the population at large. They have adopted the most salient characteristics of the Mexican material culture. Their language and clothing are, perhaps, the last salient features that they can claim as still true to their cultural inheritances. (Scanlon, 1982)

There are 56 different Native Mexican languages still actively spoken in Mexico, with some dialectal variants. If the cultures of the Native Mexican groups are to survive, it will be through the preservation of these languages through formal philological research and the education of these ethnic and language minorities. This must happen not only to offer them the opportunities that other members of the Mexican society have, but also to offer them viable alternatives through which a balance can be achieved between modernity and traditional values.

The Mexicans in the Tarahumara Region in Chihuahua, México.

The State of Chihuahua is one of the northernmost states in Mexico, sharing an extensive border with the United States. This state, the cradle of the War of Independence from Spain, and where Miguel Hidalgo was captured and executed in 1811, and its capital, Chihuahua, that served as a base for then president Benito Juárez when he retreated from the invading French troops led by Emperor Maximilian, is also the political loci for the recently decentralized educational state system. The capital, Chihuahua, is an affluent and sophisticated city; but, several hours away traveling by the train line that Porfirio Díaz created in the nineteenth century to connect all Mexico like an economic circulatory system, lies the Tarahumara Region. Beyond Creel, Lake Arareko, the Basaseachic Falls and through the Copper Canyon, it is Rarámuri country.

The Tarahumara Native Mexicans, or the Rarámuri (the Foot-runners), as they call themselves, are an agrarian and cattle raising semi-nomadic community that prefers isolation and that has remained separate and distinct from the nearby Mexican "civilization". They differentiate themselves between Rarámuri Pagótuame (those who have accepted Catholicism), about 50,000-65,000 individuals, and the Rarámuri Zimarrón (those who remained true to their indigenous animistic beliefs, or gentiles), who total about 2,000-3,000. The highest inhabitant density is in the south-southwest area of the state, among the mountains and cliffs of the

Barranca del Cobre (Copper Canyon). There has been little or no mestizification among the Rarámuri throughout the centuries, due to their isolationist tendencies and reluctancy to mingle with the "white men".

The Tarahumara live in a subsistence agrarian economy, with minimal use of technology. Many families live in the traditional Rarámuri style, inhabiting cave dwellings warmed by bonfires. The women dress in colorful full skirts and pleaded loose blouses. The men wear a *tagora*, a breech cloth wrapped around the waist, a *koyera*, a headband wrapped around the forehead, and *akakas*, spadrille-style leather sandals. They engage in limited commerce with the tourists that visit the region, but would certainly prefer to be left alone. (Cajas-Castro, 1992)

The Rarámuri communities present a special challenge to the Mexican educational authorities, since they speak their own language (Rarámuri), have little or no interest in prolonged interaction with the rest of society, and the fact that Tarahumara and Mexican educational priorities do not coincide most of the time. Tarahumaras consider agricultural and cattle raising knowledge more important than the pursue of pure academic subjects. Most of the time these topics are presented by the educational community outside of an understandable context for the Tarahumaras, disconnected to their frame of reference.

There is also a high degree of school absenteeism among the Tarahumara school population during crop planting and collection seasons. This problem is most acute in the lower grades (in

Mexico, the first three grades of elementary school): during 1976-1989, only 49% of the students passed from first to second grade, and 38.3% passed from second grade to third grade. (Servicios Educativos del Estado de Chihuahua, 1992)

The bilingual educational program that is being implemented in the Tarahumara region consists of a partial immersion, two-way content enriched hybrid between a transitional and a maintenance bilingual program. The program is managed by the "Coordinaciõn Estatal de la Tarahumara," a decentralized public agency that was created in 1987 by the state of Chihuahua legislature.

This is a maintenance program that starts on the first three grades, in which the Tarahumara is used as the teaching language for both content area and language arts instruction. This is true for <u>all</u> students enrolled in the schools participating in the program. What this means is that monolingual, Tarahumara-dominant students study content area subjects and language arts in Tarahumara <u>alongside</u> monolingual and bilingual, Spanish-dominant Mexican or Tarahumara students. During these three years, students study Spanish only as a second language subject (Servicios Educativos del Estado de Chihuahua, 1992)

Starting on third grade (fourth year of school in Mexico), the preferred language of instruction is Spanish, and Tarahumara is taught as a language arts (first language) subject for the Rarámuri, and Spanish continues to be a language arts subject for the Spanish speaking Mexicans enrolled in these schools. This bilingual program is also offered in other Native Mexican languages

indigenous to the Tarahumara region; Tepehuano, Guarijio, and Pima. (Servicios Educativos del Estado de Chihuahua, 1992)

The "Coordinación Estatal de la Tarahumara" conducted a three-year controlled study in 1992 to determine the effectiveness of this bilingual approach over the traditional transitional Spanish-dominant bilingual program used in Tarahumara schools for many years. They found that students who participated in the study and that were instructed in the new bilingual program performed better than the control group (students of similar background instructed with the traditional program) in the following categories:

Mathematics-Operations (add, subtract, multiply)

Mathematics-Logics (preoperative, transitional, operative)

Speed Reading-Word Match

Quality Reading-Clarity, punctuation, fluidity, emphasis

Reading Comprehension-Compare and contrast (in this category, the experimental group performed 25% better than the control group)

Oral Communication-(in this category, the experimental group performed 10% better than the control group)

Writing-(in this category, the experimental group performed an average of 12% better than the control group)

Teacher Observations-(subjective criteria) Teachers reported better performances in all categories for students of the experimental group

Attitude towards own culture-Tarahumara dance, singing, dress, games, moral values, the use of Tarahumara language vs. the use of Spanish (in this category, the experimental group performed an average of 8% better than the control group, with a maximum differencial of 38%)

Mr. Manuel Suárez, coordinator for the Tarahumara Regional Bilingual Project stated that, during the four years that the project has been in operations, 75,000 textbooks in Tarahumara, Tepehuano, Pima, and Guarohiro have been printed and distributed to the schools. The state of Chihuahua has undertaken a major teacher

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education and training effort to graduate more Tarahumara, Tepehuano, Pima, and Guarohiro teachers to instruct these populations. At the present time, Mr. Suárez reports that the majority of Tarahumara teachers are male, and the majority of Tepehuano teachers are female; he also reported that they are trying to balance this male/female teacher ratio.

Professor Suárez also reports a disturbing trend among Tarahumara parents; they feel that education in Tarahumara is, somehow, "less" of an education than instruction conducted in Spanish. They also feel that the language that their children should be learning is not Tarahumara (". . . they already speak the language. . . ", a Tarahumara parent) but Spanish (the dominant language of Mexican society). These feelings shared by Tarahumara parents ring too familiar in bilingual educators' ears. This is also the opinion shared by many immigrant parents that come to the United States; they think that their children's priority should be learning the language of survival in an inhospitable environment, and that learning the dominant language (English) is a key to success. Both Tarahumara and immigrant parents seem to forget that what will give their children that coveted edge on the dominant culture will be their content area knowledge (mathematical ability, science competency, computer skills) paired with their first and second language proficiency.

Conclusions

The study and acquisition of a second language by first language learners is a concern shared by diverse ethnic and linguistic minority groups in many countries (namely, the United States and Mexico). The reasons and motivations that these groups may have to become functional in the second, most dominant language may be different, but certain commonalities emerge under close scrutiny.

An analysis of certain bilingual educational models used in the United States, such as the transitional program, found it deficient, since it subtract knowledge and language proficiency from the student (its goal is to transform a student who is monolingual in its primary language into a monolingual student in the second language, and pays little or no attention to content area teaching in understandable contexts to the student). Two-way bilingual instructional models seem to be more appropriate to the needs of the second language learner because of its additive and maintenance elements built in into the program design (is goal is to transform a monolingual student into a bilingual student while instructing content areas within understandable contexts).

Many detractors of two-way bilingual programs use unsustainable arguments to support their views (not enough funds, students will lag behind, parents want their children to learn the second language, not the first, etc.) and to cover what seems to be language parochialism, elitism and restrictionism. These

attitudes only prevent children utilizing opportunities to learn other languages, foster ethnic and linguistic stereotyping on both sides, and leads to prejudice and fear of that which different from us.

In the Tarahumara region of the state of Chihuahua in Mexico, some educators and policy-makers have tried to overcome centuries of prejudice, misunderstanding and alienation, and are trying to change their ways to offer opportunities to learn to the children of the Rarámuri and other Native Mexican populations. They have chosen to let themselves teach each other in their own languages as a sign of respect and appreciation, and as an acknowledgement that that is the way that best serves these people and all people; the way of man-kind.

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